

REMARKS

To expedite prosecution, Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected to Claim 2, which has been canceled without prejudice. Claim 3 has accordingly been amended to depend from Claim 1. All claim amendments are directed to matters of form and thus are for reasons unrelated to patentability.

Claims 1, 6-12 are novel over Sasano.

As set forth above, Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected to Claim 2. Accordingly, Claim 1 is allowable. Claims 6-12, which depend from Claim 1, are allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 1.

For the above reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim 5 is patentable over Sasano in further view of Peterson et al.

As set forth above, Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected to Claim 2. Accordingly, Claim 1 is allowable. Claim 5, which depends from Claim 1, is allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 1.

For the above reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Allowable Subject Matter.

Claims 13-21 are allowed.

With regards to Claims 3 and 4, the Examiner states:

Claims 2, 3 and 4 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. (Office Action, page 5.)

As set forth above, Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of objected to Claim 2. Accordingly, Claim 1 is allowable. Claims 3 and 4, which depend from Claim 1, are allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 1.

For the above reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to Claims 3 and 4.

As to 37 C.F.R. § 1.116

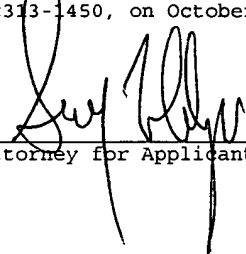
All claim amendments herein are directed to matters of form and place the application in a condition for allowance. Accordingly, this amendment is entitled to entry under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116.

Conclusion

Claims 1, 3-21 are pending in the application. For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully request allowance of all pending claims. If the Examiner has any questions relating to the above, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned Attorney for Applicant(s).

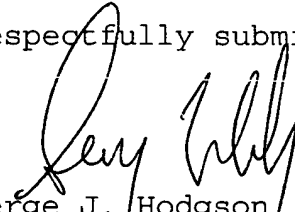
CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on October 31, 2003.


Attorney for Applicant(s)

October 31, 2003
Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,


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